<u>REMARKS</u>

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated May 21, 2004 (Paper No. 5). Claims 1, 3 to 8, 10 to 15, 17 to 22 and 24, 25, 27 and 28 are pending in the application, of which Claims 1, 8, 15, 22, 25 and 28 are independent. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2, 8, 9, 15, 16, 22, 23, 25, 26 and 28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 5,911,044 (Lo). Claims 3 to 7, 10 to 14, 17 to 21, 24 and 27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Lo in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,123,063 (Ohkubo). Reconsideration and withdrawal of these rejections are respectfully requested.

Turning to specific claim language, amended independent Claim 1 is directed to an image input system in which at least first and second information processing units are connected via a network. The system includes first control means in the first information processing unit controlling a first image input device connected to the first information processing unit to supply input image data to various application programs by a predetermined image input interface, second control means for supplying image data input by the first image input device to a first application program installed in the second information processing unit by transferring control information based on the image input interface via the network, the control information being exchanged between the first application program and the first control means, and third control means for switching a mode for transferring the image data from the first image input device to the first application program in accordance with communication status between the first image input device and the first application program and said first control means via said second control means.

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In contrast, Lo discloses a network image scanning system which includes a client computer and a scanner server computer connected by a network. A virtual TWAIN driver is utilized by an application-program running in the client computer. The virtual TWAIN driver interfaces with a client protocol encoder/decoder within the client computer. Commands and information are communicated over the computer network between the client and scanner server. More specifically "(t)he client protocol encoder/decoder 108 transmits and receives packets encoded in accordance with the Ricoh Workgroup Protocol described below with respect to FIGS. 7A-7L and 3A-13E, or any other desired protocol, which are encapsulated within the selected transport protocol. It is the responsibility of the client protocol encoder/decoder 108 to encode and decode the protocol packets." (Column 7, Lines 28 to 35).

Lo fails to disclose a third control means for switching a mode for transferring the image data from the first image input device to the first application program in accordance with communication status between the first image input device and the first application program and said first control means via said second control means. Instead, Lo merely discloses converting packets in a TWAIN protocol form into packets in RWP protocol form. Therefore, according to Lo, a communication protocol is not switched dynamically in accordance with the communication status between the first image input device and the first application program as featured in Claim 1.

Ohkubo discloses an image processor employing a plurality of types of scanners having associated scanner identification numbers comprises scanner identification table means for storing identification numbers allotted to the scanners and associated scanner control information, scanner interrogation means for requesting a selected scanner to transmit the scanner identification number associated therewith and for reading from the scanner

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identification table means the scanner control information associated with the transmitted scanner identification number, and scanner control means for controlling the selected scanner in accordance with the scanner control information read from the scanner identification table. Ohkubo is entirely silent on methods of protocol switching between different devices. Specifically, Ohkubo fails to disclose means for switching a mode for transferring image data from a first image input device to a first application program in accordance with communication status between the first image input device and the first application program and a first control means via said second control means. Therefore, the disclosures of Ohkubo fail to cure the deficiencies of Lo.

Therefore, neither Lo nor Ohkubo alone disclose all of the features of Applicant's image input system as described in Claim 1. Furthermore, no permissible modification of Lo with the disclosures of Ohkubo discloses or suggests Applicants' image input system having the feature of a third control means for switching a mode for transferring image data from a first image input device to a first application program in accordance with the communication status between the first image input device and the first application program and a first control means via a second control means. Applicant therefore submit that independent Claim 1 is in condition for allowance and respectfully requests same.

Claim 8 is directed to an information processing unit in accordance with the method of Claim 1. Applicant submits that the foregoing discussion with regard to Claim 1 applies equally to Claim 8. Therefore, Applicant submits that Claim 8 is also in condition for allowance and respectfully requests same.

Claim 15 is directed to an information processing unit in accordance with the method of Claim 1. Applicant submits that the foregoing discussion with regard to Claim 1

applies equally to Claim 15. Therefore, Applicant submits that Claim 15 is also in condition for allowance and respectfully requests same.

Claim 22 is directed to a computer readable memory medium in accordance with the method of Claim 1. Applicant submits that the foregoing discussion with regard to Claim 1 applies equally to Claim 22. Therefore, Applicant submits that Claim 22 is also in condition for allowance and respectfully requests same.

Claim 25 is directed to a computer program to be executed by a computer of an information processing unit substantially in accordance with the method of Claim 1. Applicant submits that the foregoing discussion with regard to Claim 1 applies equally to Claim 25. Specifically, Lo and Ohkubo, neither alone nor in combination, disclose or suggest compulsorily switching part of a data exchanged between a first application program and an image input device via a first control means. Therefore, Applicant submits that Claim 25 is also in condition for allowance and respectfully requests same.
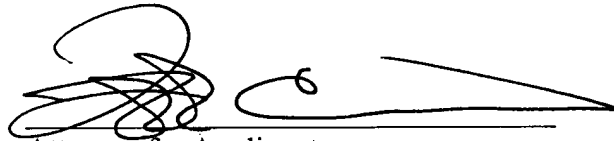
Claim 28 is directed to an information processing unit in accordance with Claim 25. Applicant submits that the foregoing discussion with regard to Claim 25 applies equally to Claim 28. Therefore, Applicant submits that Claim 28 is also in condition for allowance and respectfully requests same.

The other pending claims in this application are each dependent from the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed patentable for the same reasons. Because each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual consideration of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, CA office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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